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ABSTRACT

The Food and Nutrition Service administers interrelated child nutrition programs that provide federal aid in food, cash and technical guidance to food service programs for children from preschool age through high school. These are: National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Non-Food Assistance Program, Special Food Service Program, and Commodity Distribution Program. Most communities take part in these programs. However, there are many which need help in strengthening and improving their food services to children, especially the needy. Examples of what others have done, descriptions of the child nutrition programs, along with suggestions for community service projects are given in this handbook. It is third in a series of Food and Nutrition Service handbooks for volunteers, which also includes: Food Stamp Handbook for Volunteers (FNS-1), and Donated Foods Handbook for Volunteers (FNS-2). (CK)

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HANDBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE • U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • FNS-10

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VOLUNTEERS AGAINST HUNGER

Americans have been shocked to realize that hunger and malnutrition are not confined to distant lands, or to cities and counties in other States. Hungry children may live in the community where you live; perhaps in your own neighborhood or just a few blocks away.

Children especially are vulnerable to long-range destructive effects of malnutrition on growth and development. Science is accumulating evidence that nutrition can influence a child's ability to learn and therefore his intellectual performance. So, the Nation has committed itself to action. The goal is that all American children, no matter what their family's income level, have access to good food at school.

We have the resources, abundant supplies of nourishing food from America's farmlands, viable programs to deliver food help to those who need it; and perhaps most important, a growing army of concerned, dedicated business and professional leaders and volunteer citizens giving their time, talents and resources to help end hunger in America. Many have asked the Department of Agriculture what they can do to help. This handbook suggests ways you can help get food to hungry children in schools, day care centers, recreation programs, preschool activities and other organized programs for children.

The Food and Nutrition Service administers inter-related Child Nutrition Programs that provide Federal aid in food, cash and technical guidance to food service programs for children from preschool age through high school. These are:

- National School Lunch Program
- School Breakfast Program
- Non-food Assistance Program
- Special Food Service Program
- Commodity Distribution Program

Most communities take part in these programs. But there are many which need help in strengthening and improving their food services to children, especially the needy. Local school systems often lack resources to provide free or reduced price meals for youngsters in need of them.

You, either as an individual or a member of community organizations, may be able to help locate and remedy problems preventing these food services from reaching children in your area.

Examples of what others have done, descriptions of the Child Nutrition Programs, along with suggestions for community service projects are given in this handbook. It is third in a series of Food and Nutrition Service handbooks for volunteers, which also includes:

Food Stamp Handbook for Volunteers	FNS-1
Donated Foods Handbook for Volunteers	FNS-2

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TAKING INVENTORY

To help foster improved child nutrition services in your community, you need to start by taking inventory. Learn about USDA's child feeding programs and where and how they operate in your area. From there you can indentify needs that you can help to meet and set priorities for action. Here are some suggestions:

- Get in touch with local school officials—members of the school board, superintendent, principal, school lunch supervisor—who have the responsibility for policies and decision making concerning initiation or expansion of school food service. Find out if your schools are taking part in the National School Lunch Program. If not, why not?

- Let school officials know of your interest in establishing or expanding school food service. Ask what you and your group could do to support this effort, especially in helping to provide free and reduced price meals to needy children. Many schools lack the funds and facilities to reach all the children who need free meals.

- Talk to board members, directors of child day care centers or summer recreation programs, and welfare department leaders. Do they know about the Special Food Service Program for Children and how it can help feed children in non-school situations?

- If possible, arrange to visit the food service programs in schools and other children's programs. Find out what other community groups are doing to support and improve child nutrition.

NOTES

YOUR ROLE AS A VOLUNTEER

In general, volunteers and community organizations can be most effective by devoting their capabilities and resources to these general areas of activity: developing parent and community support; getting needed facilities and funds; and performing necessary routine or special tasks.

Here are some of the activities that might be undertaken, along with examples of service projects that individuals and groups in different parts of the country are already carrying out. These are to help you get started. From here on, your own experience, ingenuity and imagination will suggest new approaches suited to the needs in your community.

Parent and Community Support

Volunteer workers with Economic Opportunity Atlanta help expand participation of children from low-income families in the school lunch program. Workers help distribute the application cards for free and reduced price lunches to children from low-income families and do necessary follow-up to see that all needy children and enrolled in the program.

You can help promote and interpret the programs to the community and generate volunteer interest and support by working closely with local school officials in these activities.

- Help distribute and plan informational letters or fact sheets to parents, civic leaders, faculty and students.
- Invite the school food service manager to speak at civic club or business group meetings, Parent-Teacher Associations, or other community gatherings.
- Help publicize the school food service program to local press, radio, and television. Personality news features on Food Service personnel can aid greatly in communicating the goals of the programs.
- Encourage youth groups to develop informative and attractive materials on school food service activities that can be posted on school and community bulletin boards.
- Offer to help the food service manager recruit and train volunteer workers for special or routine tasks. For an effective service program it is a first priority that volunteers be familiar with the child nutrition programs. Volunteers contacting the public must have a working knowledge of the local policy on free and reduced price lunches.
- Ask school officials if they need assistance in locating needy children and helping their parents fill out applications for free or reduced price lunches. Many parents don't realize their youngsters are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Some schools and children's centers need someone to help serve the children and supervise the lunch periods—or breakfast.
- If your school has no food service program, talk to school officials about the possibility of involving interested groups in an advisory committee. This would give laymen an opportunity to identify with child food service programs by aiding in their growth and development. This involvement can and should extend to student groups since they benefit most from improved school food.

Funds and Facilities

Indianapolis scored a major breakthrough to get school lunches to children in typical core city situations by developing a central kitchen to serve several surrounding schools. The city received $125,000 to buy necessary kitchen equipment from USDA's Nonfood Assistance Program. The School Board bought a suitable central kitchen build-

ing which had been a soft drink bottling plant. The owner sold the building to the school system for about 15 percent of real value. The central kitchen is geared to serve at least 27 schools with lunches for about 15,000 children.

An Atlanta radio station and the Georgia Federation of Women's Club teamed up to conduct a special fund raising campaign that brought in over $20,000 in donations to help Georgia schools provide lunches to needy children.

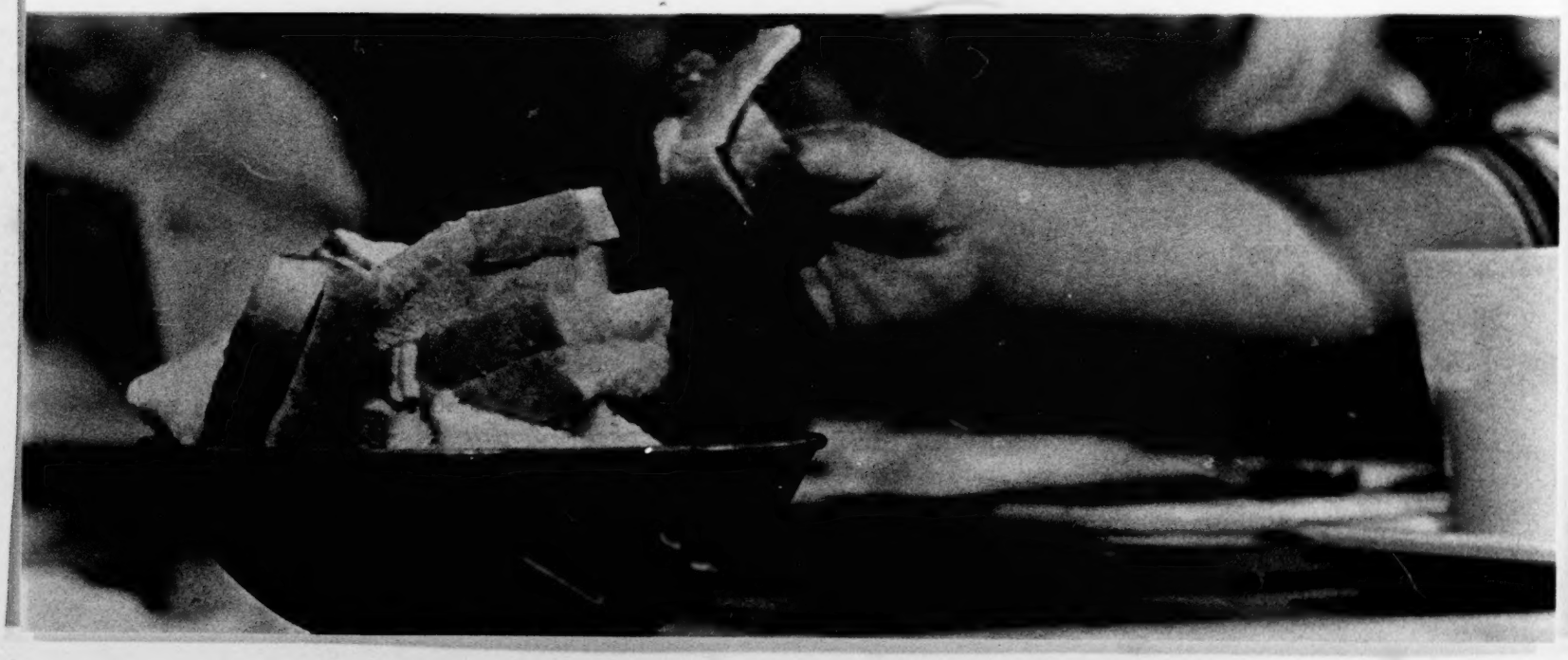
A community service organization presented a check to the Greenville (Mississippi) Public Schools cafeteria supervisor to buy 1,330 lunches for children unable to pay for hot lunches at school. The lunch program provides a noon meal for about 70 percent of all students attending the school.

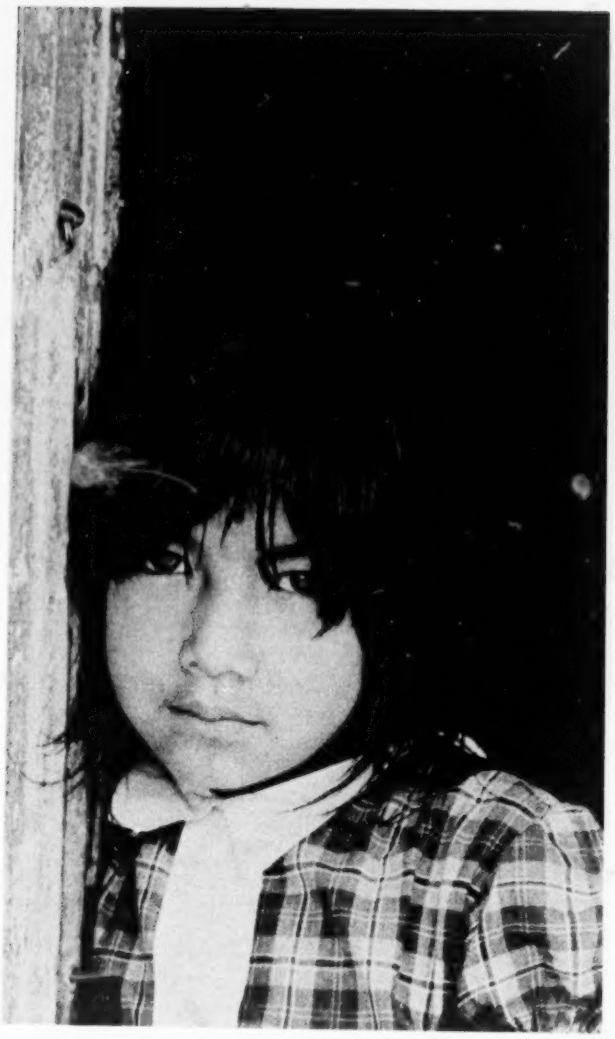
You might help school officials get needed funds or facilities to expand or begin child feeding programs.

- Encourage fund-raising efforts of community organizations to buy equipment or furnishings for food service programs.
- Cooperate in financing labor and continuing operating costs.
- Encourage contributions for free and reduced price lunches.

Direct Help

In Philadelphia, neighborhood volunteers help in the expansion of the satellite feeding program to provide food service to schools that have inadequate or no lunchroom facilities. Women volunteers perform such jobs as taking meal tickets and selling extra half-pints of milk during the lunch period. This volunteer service improves the operation of the lunch program, is free of cost to the school, and best of all helps provide nutritious lunches to boys and girls.





You can volunteer for necessary routine or special tasks in the school lunchroom.

- Assist with recordkeeping
- Sell lunch tickets
- Help supervise lunchroom at noon or during breakfast service.
- Assist when needed in kitchen or on serving line.
- Act as adviser or do food purchasing.

Encourage Student Participation

The "Cafe of the Three Seasons" was planned and spearheaded by a student cafeteria committee of the Springfield Estates Elementary School, Springfield, Va., to "improve cafeteria manners and to increase student interest in the lunch program." Teachers, volunteers, and students working together constructed a restaurant atmosphere in a corner of the school cafeteria complete with murals of the three seasons that school is in session, a picket fence, round tables and tablecloths, multi-colored chairs, and artificial trees. Students take turns dining in the restaurant, and good manners are rewarded with return visits. The school principal reports a new dimension to the school lunch program and said: "It involves the students in the real life of the school, and they have a feeling of belonging to the school through working for it."

You can help spark student interest and participation in the school lunch program. To achieve the school lunch goal of better nutrition, youngsters must be motivated to eat and enjoy the nutritious food served. The lunch program provides excellent opportunities to introduce new foods, and develop a student's interest and knowledge of good food and good nutrition.

You may want to talk to school officials about these ideas:

- Volunteers can help brighten up the school cafeteria with curtains, plants and other decor. Students—from art classes, scout groups, and other activities—could design and produce murals, posters, and other wall decorations for the cafeteria. A contest might stimulate contributions and overall student interest.
- Volunteers might help set up and decorate a special section of the cafeteria for a "school restaurant" with table cloths or fancy place mats and cloth napkins. The privilege of eating in the "restaurant" practicing "eating out" manners could be rotated from class to class. Language clubs could plan and print cultural menus.
- Volunteers might help set up and counsel a student school lunch advisory panel, which could offer menu suggestions and funnel other student ideas and comments to the school lunch manager.
- Volunteers might work with teachers, students and the school lunch manager to help plan "tasting classes" in which students are introduced to new foods, that will appear in school lunches. It's an excellent way for students to learn of foods from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds, to relate iessons in science, health, language, and social studies.

Special Help for Out-of-School Programs

A Maine family contributed the use of their farm and its land and facilities, their time and work to provide food and recreation for the summer for area children. This family's project, under the sponsorship of the city parks and recreation department, provided underprivileged children with food service, with the help of USDA's Special Food Service Program for children.

Money from USDA's Special Food Service Program for Children "really saved us," said the wife of a retired building contractor, "We could not possibly have fed the children adequately and kept the tuition as low as it is." They started and are operating the Shiprock (New Mexico) Nursery School that provides care and serves two meals and a snack daily for up to 75 little Navajo children. They learned of the need for facilities to care for these children while their mothers worked at a local factory. Their own money largely financed the renovation and development of an abandoned boarding school. Her husband also did much of the work himself, with help from the Indian community and some assistance from other government agencies.

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Out-of-school programs for children such as day-care centers, summer recreation programs, after school activities, afford opportunities to reach children in need of better nutrition with good food service programs. Many of these activities need a variety of volunteer services. Children's programs are often sponsored by churches or other voluntary organizations relying on private contributions, for part or all of their support.

You can help the leaders of these non-school activities first by supplying information about the Special Food Service Program for Children, if they don't already know about it. The director of the program or board of directors may need your help in getting food service started. The first step is to contact the State school lunch director or the nearest office of the Food and Nutrition Service. (See page 16 for more details.) After you learn what Federal and State help is available for the food service program, you will need to assess out donations of funds, equipment, facilities and in many cases volunteer labor to help prepare and serve meals or snacks.

This kind of help may also be needed by children's centers which already have a food service program. In addition, they may need a variety of other volunteer services—such as transportation, teacher aides—not directly related to the food service operation, but without which the center couldn't continue operating or feeding children.

NOTES

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The National School Lunch Program helps provide wholesome, appetizing lunches to the Nation's school children through direct financial aid, Federally donated foods and technical guidance.

Participating school food service systems strive to serve lunches that children will eat and enjoy. The nutritional goal is to serve lunches that contain all the ingredients of a Type A Pattern which are milk, meat or alternate, vegetables or fruits or both, bread, and butter or margarine. The Type A lunch provides on the average about one-third of the recommended daily dietary allowances for children in the United States as established by the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences. These lunches make an important contribution to the good nutrition so vital to both mental and physical growth during a child's formative years.

The National School Lunch Act of 1946 requires that schools participating in the National School Lunch Program provide free or reduced price lunches to children determined by local school officials as being unable to pay for them.

Schools must develop and publicly announce to the parents their policy on eligibility for free or reduced price meals. Parents can then ask the school principal or the school nurse about free or reduced price lunches for their children. The school decides which children are eligible.

Children determined to be eligible for free or reduced price meals cannot be identified or discriminated against in any way.

Federal funds for the National School Lunch Program are apportioned among the States to be used in reimbursing schools for part of the cost of the food they purchase. Schools approved to participate receive cash assistance at a specified rate per lunch served and a *pro rata* share of all Federally donated foods available for use in the program.

To be eligible for Federal aid, schools must agree to:

- Operate the program on a nonprofit basis.
- Provide free or reduced price lunches for needy children.
- Serve all children regardless of race, color, or national origin.
- Serve nutritious lunches that meet the requirement for Type A lunches as established by the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Kitchen and dining facilities.

To take part in the school lunch program a local school needs to provide:

- Personnel to plan, prepare, and serve the meals.

Schools drawing attendance from low-income areas may also receive special assistance in the form of higher than average rates of reimbursement to help meet food costs. Additional assistance in form of cash to help purchase equipment is also available to needy schools.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is authorized by the National School Lunch Act to buy and distribute foods produced domestically to schools participating in the National School Lunch Program. These foods include frozen and canned meat and poultry items and a variety of canned fruits and vegetables that are especially suited for children's lunches. Also, foods acquired by USDA under its surplus-removal and price-support programs are usually available to all eligible nonprofit school lunch programs. However, approximately 80 percent of the food used in the National School Lunch Program is purchased by participating schools on the local market.

All public and nonprofit private schools (such as parochial, sectarian, and denominational schools) of high school grade or under may apply for participation in the program.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The School Breakfast Program helps provide children with a nutritious breakfast in schools that have many needy pupils or to which many of the children travel long distances.

Federal funds for school breakfasts are divided among the States to help schools pay the cost of locally purchased food. Funds are also available to help buy kitchen equipment. USDA donated foods are also available to breakfast programs.

To be eligible, schools must agree to:

A. Operate the breakfast program on a nonprofit basis for all children regardlesss of race, color, or national origin.

B. Serve breakfasts that meet nutritional standards set by the Secretary of Agriculture to include: milk, fruit, full strength fruit or vegetable juice, bread or cereal. Schools are encouraged to serve a meat or meat alternate as often as possible.

C. Provide breakfasts free or at a reduced price to children whom local school authorities find are unable to pay the full price. Children getting free or reduced-price breakfasts must not be identified or discriminated against in any way.

Voluntary efforts of concerned individuals and local community groups can do much to help their community get a school breakfast program or, if they have one, help sponsor free or reduced price breakfasts to needy children to help ease the financial burdens of the local food service program.

Here are some of the local responsibilities to consider in planning a school breakfast program. For school breakfast program, you will need the following:

- Kitchen facilities
- Someone to plan, prepare, and serve the meals.

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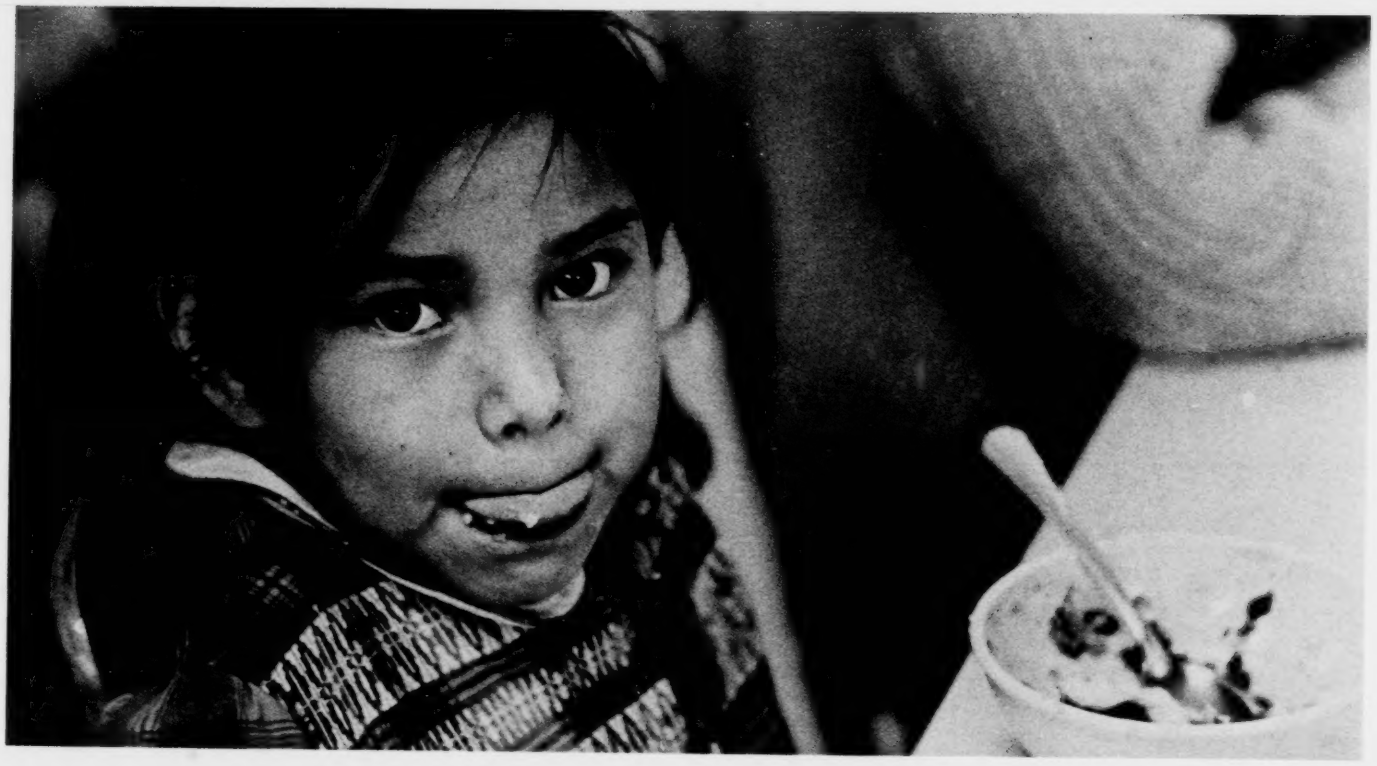

SPECIAL FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

USDA's Special Food Service Program for Children is a concentrated effort to assist in improving the nutritional health of both preschool and school-age children.

Day-care centers, settlement houses, and recreation centers that provide day-care for children from low-income areas, or from areas with many working mothers, can take part in the program. Summer day-camps and similar recreational programs are also major users of the program. In-residence institutions are not eligible.

The Special Food Service Program offers the following help:

- Cash reimbursement from Federal funds for food purchased. Up to a maximum rate of:
  15¢ for each breakfast
  30¢ for each lunch or supper
  10¢ for each supplemental food served between meals.
- In cases of severe need, financing of up to 80 percent of the operating costs may be considered. Financial help to buy or rent necessary equipment. Institutions must pay at least one-fourth of the equipment costs.
- USDA donated foods—depending on the amounts and kinds available.
- Technical assistance and guidance to establish and operate a program.

Institutions approved for participation must agree to:

1. Operate the program on a nonprofit basis for all children regardless of race, color, or national origin.
2. Serve meals which meet minimum requirements established by USDA.
3. Supply free or reduced-price meals to children unable to pay the full charge. Children getting free or reduced-price meals must not be identified or discriminated against in any way.

NONFOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EQUIPMENT)

The Child Nutrition Act of 1966 authorized Federal aid to help schools in poverty areas purchase equipment needed to establish, maintain, and expand school food services.

Federal funds for nonfood purchases are apportioned on an equitable basis among the States to pay needy schools for up to three-fourths of the totals price of the equipment including installation charges. The remaining one-fourth must come from sources within the State.

Nonfood assistance is for schools drawing attendance from needy areas. It helps schools with no equipment or inadequate equipment to start or expand food service programs. Schools approved for nonfood assistance must agree to take part in the National School Lunch Program and/or the School Breakfast Program. If it has only the breakfast program, the school must agree to work toward starting a lunch program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION—

Write to the State education agency in your capital city, to the nearest FNS regional office, or to the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

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